Part III.—Epitome.

Progress of Psychiatry in 1901.

AMERICA.

By Dr. H. M. Bannister.

The record of American psychiatry for the past year is not an eventful one so far as matters of interest to trans-Atlantic readers are concerned. At the beginning of the year the subject of interest was the New York Pathological Institute and the difficulties that involved its management. For a number of months it has been in a state of suspended activity—not dead but sleeping—and now appears to be about to start again on a fresh career of usefulness. A new organisation has been planned, an advisory board appointed, consisting of recognised authorities in their departments, and including representatives of the related specialties of psychology and general biology, as well as those of pathology, neurology, and psychiatry. The gentlemen who have accepted positions on the board are well known, and their interest in the Institute and its aims undoubted. Their names will carry weight; Professor McKeen Cattell holds the chair of psychology in Columbia University, Professors Ewing and Herter represent the two great medical schools of Bellevue and Cornell, Dr. H. A. Hern, of Albany, a well-known neurologist, Dr. Bumpus, of the American Museum of Natural History, Drs. Pilgrim and Macdonald, representing the State Hospitals, and Dr. Frederick Peterson, *ex officio*, as commissioner of lunacy, complete the board. These gentlemen will exercise a general oversight over the work, and when a new working staff has been appointed, we may look for good work, carried on under more favourable conditions than was formerly the case. It is the intention in their reorganisation not only to carry on original research as in the past, but to utilize the Institute for special instruction of the members of the different asylum staffs in psychiatry and special research work. It will be located in one of the departments of the Manhattan Hospital until such time as a special reception hospital for the insane can be provided.

The appointment of Dr. Peterson as head of the Lunacy Commission appears to be one that is generally endorsed. He has shown his quality in the part he has taken in the origination and oversight of the Craig Colony for Epileptics, an institution that is doing excellent work, both from an humanitarian and a scientific point of view. Dr. Peterson is a scientific physician of acknowledged standing, but it is not, perhaps, so generally known that, like Drs. A. W. Holmes and S. Weir Mitchell, he is also a literary man, whose work in this line, if he continues it, will probably give him an independent reputation apart from that gained in medicine. Thus far it has been apparently only a recreation.

I have to report what seems to be a backward step at the Ohio Epileptic Asylum at Gallipolis. Owing to what seems to be a political wrangle, the merits of which are not clearly apparent to outsiders, Dr.

https://doi.org/10.1192/bjp.48.200.124 Published online by Cambridge University Press

Ohlmacher, the pathologist of the institution, has been forced out of his position, in which he has done valuable work. I have not yet heard of any one of reputation taking his place, and since his departure the laboratory building, with its valuable collection and equipment, has been destroyed by fire. It is to be feared that it will be some time before we can look for further scientific contributions from that source.

Apropos of political management of asylums, a curious, if not edifying, instance is reported from a southern State. There, where politics are so nearly unanimous as to make one think that there ought to be no differences sufficient to interfere with the asylum *personnel*, the directors in their unwisdom saw fit to make the rule that none except those to the manner born should be employed. All aliens (non-voters?) were therefore warned that they could not much longer hold their positions. They appealed to the Governor of the State, and not receiving satisfaction, they and their sympathisers—apparently all, or nearly all, of the attendant force—struck in a body. This brought matters to a crisis; the Governor himself visited the asylum, and made a personal appeal to them. According to the newspaper reports, the obnoxious regulation was repealed, and everything was again harmonious. This is the first asylum strike on record here, and it is to be hoped there may never be a similar cause for another.

The experts, who examined the assassin Czolgosz as to his mental condition, have made their report and declared him sane. Whether or not he had accomplices may never be known. Dr. E. C. Spitzka, in a published review of his case, seems to think he had, and that the murder of the President may have been plotted by men who used the murderer as their tool. Of course his persistent denial of the participation of anyone with him in the act does not necessarily command credence—it is only what might have been expected if there had been a plot and his courage had not failed. The psychology of the anarchist of the present day is, in some respects, a problem, and it is an unpleasantly large one in connection with a certain proportion of the foreign-born labour element in this country. Czolgosz himself was hardly a native; though born in America, his associations had not been American. It has been said that he was educated in the public schools, but I am informed that such was not the case. It is not hard to define insanity in a legal sense in a way that might easily be made to include the modern anarchists; they are certainly out of harmony with their environment in any decently organized society, and if we credit them with any sort of sincerity, they are the most deluded of individuals. No one is inclined, however, to believe them irresponsible, and the prompt conviction and execution of Czolgosz has certainly had the full endorsement of public opinion.

A year or two ago, there was much talk about insanity in the army, especially in the Philippines, but the facts are apparently not formidable. Indeed, both mental and physical conditions of the American soldier in the tropics appear to be generally good, and the troops in Porto Rico last year made the record for health in the army annals. Much is being said at the present time in regard to the drinking habits of the soldier, and the "canteen" question is a living one. A year or so ago, Congress, at the instance of the temperance workers of this country,

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abolished the sale of beer and light wines, which had before been allowed at the military posts. This has stirred up much opposition, and the majority of the army medical corps, as well as of the line officers, appear to be in favour of a change back to the old order, claiming that the canteen, as formerly conducted, was more favourable to temperance and to the better discipline of the army. Without the sale of beer and wines under official oversight, they say that the soldiers resort to disreputable saloons that spring up in the vicinity of the posts; in short, that the liquor-selling in the canteen was a necessary safety-valve for the indulgence of the appetites of the men. A few army officers have, however, expressed themselves strongly in favour of the law as it is, among them the commanding general, General Miles, who, in his report just given out, offers figures to show that discipline has not suffered, and that there are fewer desertions under the present law than there were before. As the law has only been on trial for a year, its repeal by the coming session of Congress would be very far from convincing as to its demerits. The subject is not directly one of psychiatry, but it has its bearings in that direction. As I think I may have said before, the temperance question is a perennial one in this country, and the agitation, though sometimes carried on by extremists, has done much good. It is probable, as General Miles says, that the majority, or, at least, a very strong minority, of the recruits for the U.S. army have not been in the habit of using liquor or fermented drinks to any extent, and there is therefore an impropriety in having them introduced to the habit under Government auspices. It is safe to say that, if the present law is repealed, a very powerful influence will be exerted to re-enact it.

It seems probable that there may soon be erected some sort of substantial memorial to Miss Dorothy Dix, whose name is so familiar in asylum reform and other good works on both sides of the water.

It is worthy of note here that the State of Michigan has made an appropriation for a psychopathic hospital in connection with the medical department of the State University, thus affording an opportunity for the special study of mental disease. It may be that this is only the forerunner of other similar foundations in connection with other centres of medical education, and the experience in Michigan will be watched with interest elsewhere.

Among the deaths of prominent workers in the specialty of psychiatry during the past year two may be particularly mentioned—Mr. John C. Shaw of Brooklyn, and Dr. W. L. Worcester of Danvers, Mass. Dr. Shaw was better known as a neurologist, but he was for some years superintendent of the Flatbush Asylum, and the author of numerous papers, etc., relating to insanity. Dr. Worcester was one of the earnest workers in the pathology of insanity, and his death is a loss to the profession. He was in a sense a martyr to his work, his death having been caused by blood-poisoning from an infected finger. Beside being an accomplished physician and pathological expert, he was, like his brother, Dean C. Worcester, of the Governing Commission of the Philippines, strongly interested in natural history, and, but for his diversion into medicine, would probably have made his mark as a naturalist. He was beginning to do his best work at the time of his death.

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